

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6827

S E C R E T HELSINKI 2623

E.O. 11652: GDS

ACAGS: PFOR, FI, OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: STATE OF US-FINNISH RELATIONS, OCTOBER 1973

FOR STOESSEL FROM AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 199122

1. US-FINNISH CURRENT RELATIONS ARE GOOD, AND THERE ARE FB BASIC BILATERAL PROBLEMS. TRADE IS EXPANDING SATISFACTORILY; TWO US NAVAL VESSELS WILL BE VISITING OCTOBER 20-21; NACY HANKS WILL BE MAIN SPEAKER AT AMERICA DAYS IN HELSINKI OCTOBER 26-28, UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF PRESIDENT KEKKONEN; THE CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM IS ACTIVE, THE FINNISH FOREIGN MINISTER AND I SEE EACH OTHER PERIODICALLY (DINNERS AND SAUNAS) WITH READY ACCESS WHENEVER I WANT IT ON AN AD HOC BASIS; AND I WILL PRESENT THE APOLLO 17 MOON ROCK AND FINNISH FLAG TO KEKKONEN ON OCTOBER 26.

2. NEVERTHELESS, WITH THEIR PREOCCUPATION WITH RELATIONS BETWEEN FINLAND AND THE USSR, THE FINNS OFTEN TEND TO TAKE WESTERN GOODWILL AND US SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING FOR THEIR POLICIES FOR GRANTED. THIS BEARS WATCHING. FROM TIME TO TIME A FRIENDLY BUT FIRM LOW-KEY REMINDER SHOULD BE MADE THAT CONTINUED US SUPPORT OF THE FINNISH DESIRE FOR POLITICAL STABILITY AND ECONOMIC VIABILITY IN LINE WITH ITS SPECIAL BRAND OF NEUTRALITY (PEACE TREATY AND SOVIET-FINNISH MUTUAL ASSISTANCE PACT) REQUIRES EVEN-HANDED TREATMENT OF ALL COUNTRIES.

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3. THE FEELING OF RESPECT FOR THE UNITED STATES AND THE APPRECIATION OF WHAT OUR STAND IN EUROPE AND THE WORLD MEANS FOR THE FINNS IS STILL WIDESPREAD HERE. THIS RESERVOIR OF UNDERSTANDING IS IN DANGER OF BEING DRAINED, HOWEVER, BY AN ACTIVE RADICAL IDEOLOGICAL ELEMENT WHICH IS THE LOUDEST VOICE IN THE HIGHLY POLITICIZED YOUTH MOVEMENT AND WHICH HAS STRONG REPRESENTATION IN THE MEDIA. VIETNAM ACCELERATED THIS PROCESS AND THE RECENT EVENTS IN CHILE SHOW SIGNS OF BEING TURNED TO THE SAME END.

4. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THESE DAYS OF THE NEW "ACTIVE" NEUTRALITY PURSUED BY FINLAND DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS, WHICH IS AN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE GENERAL RECOGNITION OF FINLAND AS A NEUTRAL THROUGH "MAKING ITSELF USEFUL." EXAMPLES ARE: HOSTING SALT TALKS, PROVIDING FULL SUPPORT FOR THE PREPARATORY AND FIRST PHASES OF CSCE WITH HELSINKI ALREADY NAMED AS SITE OF PHASE THREE OF CSCE; TAKING THE LEAD BOTH ON RECOGNITION OF DIVIDED STATES, PARTICULARLY THE GERMANIES, AND IN ESTABLISHING FORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH BOTH COMECON AND EEC, CALLING FOR MORE LIBERALIZED TREATMENT OF EACH OTHERS PRODUCTS. WE SHOULD MAKE SURE THAT SUCH FINNISH ACTIVITIES ARE NOT DETRIMENTAL TO US INTERESTS. WE SHOULD ALSO BE ALERT TO POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES TO CHANNEL FINNISH DESIRES TO BE "USEFUL" INTO ACTIVITIES BENEFICIAL TO THE WESTERN WORLD.

5. FINLAND HAS JUST TAKEN A MAJOR POLITICAL STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION BY SIGNING ITS FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE EEC, AFTER AGONIZING ABOUT IT FOR THREE YEARS (OR MORE THAN ONE YEAR SINCE INITIALING AGREEMENT - JULY 1972). HAVING TAKEN THIS MAJOR STEP, THE FINNS ARE NOW EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT SOVIET REACTION AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO GO TO GREAT LENGTHS, ESPECIALLY DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, TO ASSURE THE SOVIETS THAT FINLAND'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR HAS NOT CHANGED.

6. WE SHOULD TRY TO BE AS UNDERSTANDING AS POSSIBLE
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OF THE FINNS' PRESENT, AND HOPEFULLY TEMPORARY, "ACUTE SENSITIVITIES", BUT SHOULD AT THE SAME TIME APPLY GENTLE BUT FIRM PRESSURE ON ANY MATTERS IMPORTANT TO US, AMONG THEM THOSE AFFECTING OUR TRADE INTERESTS. EXAMPLES OF THE LATTER ARE FINNISH PURCHASES OF NUCLEAR ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANTS AND THE SUPPLY OF URANIUM FUELS, AS WELL AS IMPROVED CUSTOMS TREATMENT OF U.S. PRODUCTS WHEN TARIFF BARRIERS ARE REDUCED IN

TRADE WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

7. DURING ROGERS-KARJALAINEN BILATERAL IN HELSINKI IN JULY, SECRETARY ROGERS ACCEPTED INVITATION FOR OFFICIAL VISIT TO FINLAND. GOF HOPES THAT THIS WILL BE PICKED UP BY SECRETARY KISSINGER.

8. IN PAST, FINNS HAVE NOT INDICATED PARTICULARLY STRONG FEELINGS ON MID-EAST SITUATION. IN PRESENT CONFLICT, THE FINNS AS A PEOPLE PROBABLY IDENTIFY MORE CLOSELY WITH ISRAEL THEN WITH THE ARABS. GOF HAS SUPPORTED ITS EVEN-HANDED APPROACH TO THIS TROUBLE SPOT BY SUPPLYING FINNISH TROOPS FOR THE MID-EAST UN OBSERVER FORCE. IN FACT CURRENT COMMANDER OF THIS FORCE IS A FINN.
KREHBIEL

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